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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/435,198	11/05/1999	KEVIN A. LAYNE	1148.002US1	4881

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EXAMINER

GORT, ELAINE L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3627

DATE MAILED: 12/02/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/435,198

Applicant(s)

LAYNE, KEVIN A.

Examiner

Elaine Gort

Art Unit

3627

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 September 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

It is unclear in claim 1, line 2 what is meant by "including debt collection information from debt collection by the collection agency".

It is further unclear in claim 1, line 3 what is meant by "debtors". Applicant may want to be more specific regarding who's debtor, such as the client's or the collection agency's, is being referred to.

It is further unclear in claim 1, line 7 what is being referred to by a "user process".

It is further unclear in claim 1, line 14 what is meant by "access of updated account information". Perhaps what is meant is 'access to updated account information.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

4. Claims 1-20 are rejected because they lack patentable utility. Claims 1-20 only claim the manipulation of data but perform no concrete, useful or tangible result. This rejection can be overcome by claiming the output of data in a tangible form such as a report.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith (US Patent 5,822,400) in view of Goode et al. (US Patent 6,163,272).

Smith discloses the claimed method for accessing debt collection information including comprising: storing of account data (e.g. 28, customer credit card company client's credit card account data such as amount due, account id, past due date and phone number; client the credit card company) in a database (16), data associated with an account of the clients of the collection agency (28 data, collection agency being the call center) including information relating to debt collection from one or more debtors (e.g. customer data); processing access requests with a server (16) from a user process (e.g. 30) controlled by a remote user; and processing data access request so client representative (dialer or agent handling call) is allowed access only to data items associated with an account belonging to that client (caller views data 28 only with call

related account data) for remote review of collection status of the account of the client and the updating of account information (e.g. credit card account balance would be updated if a collection is made) after database is updated (updated at 40).

Smith discloses the claimed device except for credential processing to authenticate the identity of the client representative with a plurality of access tiers and is silent regarding client access to updated account information. Goode et al. discloses that it is known in the art to provide an authentication system which processes credentials of users to verify and control access to different levels of information for security purposes. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to control access to account information of Smith with the plurality of access tiers with id authentication of Goode et al., in order to verify and control access to information for security purposes.

Regarding client access to updated account information. Smith inherently would provide the client updated account information so the client can know which accounts had been contacted, on which accounts bills were paid or which accounts the client representative was unsuccessful in making contact or collecting. In the alternate, if not found inherent, it would have been obvious at the time of the invention by one having ordinary skill in the art of data processing for this information to be accessed by the client for the purposes given above.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-20 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

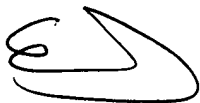
Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elaine Gort whose telephone number is (703)308-6391. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Olszewski, can be reached at (703)308-5183. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or processing is assigned is (703)305-7687.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-1113.

EG



November 29, 2000



ROBERT P. OLSZEWSKI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
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